



Habitats

Missouri River; Mississippi River; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

summer: statewide; scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats; migrant: statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

bank swallow

Riparia riparia

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Aves
Order:	Passeriformes
Family:	Hirundinidae

Features

An adult bank swallow is 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 inches long. Both sexes are similar in appearance. The brown body has a white belly and chest. There is a distinct brown stripe across the top of the chest.

Natural History

The bank swallow lives in open areas, over fields, in marshes, and especially along streams, lakes, and ponds. It eats insects. Its call is "brtt" or "bjjt." This bird is colonial (stays in large groups). It has an unsteady flight pattern with irregular fluttering. Spring migrants begin arriving in Iowa in mid-April. Nesting occurs from May to July. Nests are placed in banks along waterways or roadways or in sand mounds. Nests are in colonies of 20 to 2,000 pairs. Nest cavities average two to three feet deep and contain three to seven white eggs. Fall migration peaks from early August through early September.